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This study surveyed the Asian/African courses offered at junior colleges in New York State. Literature cited emphasized the need for such courses at the junior college level to acquaint students with, and help them develop ar. appreciation for, the culture and people of foreign countries. Questionnaires were sent to the president or dean of the 65 2-year colleges in the state: of the 54 that responded, 45 (83%) reported designated Asian/African courses or had measurable amounts of material infused in courses with other names. Nineteen Asian courses and 11 African courses were reported: planned new courses numbered six and 11 respectively. Factors associated with area study offerings included faculty travel, faculty participation in federally sponsored seminars, and the presence of foreign faculty members. Colleges supplemented course offerings by increasing their area library collection, providing art and book exhibits, using slide and film presentations, and inviting foreign speakers on campus. (MB)

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ASIAN/AFRICAN STUDIES IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGES OF NEW YORK STATE

by

Winifred K. Eaton

Introduction

The following report is the result of a study started during the summer and fall of 1968 and continued into 1969. It was sponsored and financed by the College Center of the Finger Lakes through a Grant-in-Aid, and furthered by the State Education Department of New York State. Without the cooperation in answering questionnaires of the presidents and deans of the colleges consulted, as well as the enlightening interviews with enthusiastic faculty members who were actually conducting the courses in Asian or African studies, this survey could not have been completed. My thanks are due to them, and to the many persons at state level who aided me in making contacts among New York's more than 65 two-year colleges. The general pattern is clear, and it is probable that further advances in coverage of areas outside our Western culture stream, particularly in the African field, are already being made.

Scope of the Inquiry

A number of questions occur as one starts a specific investigation of a segment of the educational structure. Among them are these:

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1. What is the importance of the knowledge gained and what has already been done on the subject?

2. Why select this particular segment: the two-year college?

3. Why choose Asian/African studies over others?

4. What significance has New York State as a unit of investigation?

In answer to the questions posed, I would cite the publication Non-Western Studies in the Liberal Arts College issued by the Association of American Colleges in 1964. There the distinguished members of the Commission on International Understanding, made up of presidents from small and large liberal arts colleges, declared firmly for an education that transcends differences of space, country, race, and political allegiance.

> If future generations of Americans are to acquire competence for living in the world of tomorrow, their education must transcend its customary limitation to the ways of life and patterns of thought that characterize Western civilization. . . .
>
> A man must come to see himself in relation to his total environment in space and time, and so to locate himself on the map of human experience. This entails both the analysis of similarities and the perception of differences, both an understanding of the cultural tradition that has helped to shape him and a knowledge of competing traditions which provide a standard of comparison. . . .

In the same year, 1964, a sheaf of other material appeared. The Association for Asian Studies published as a Newsletter a complete supplementary issue on opportunities for training faculty in hitherto unfamiliar Asian fields. The U. S. State Department's Agency for International Development published a nationwide

bulletin: Research Centers on the Developing Areas which covered such diverse fields as Agriculture, Political Development, and Socio-Cultural Change. New York State put out in 1964 one in a series of progress reports entitled The Challenge of a Revolutionary World, as well as a deal of mimeographed material sent to all interested New York State administrators and faculty members. This material also detailed opportunities for further study. Among individual writers may be mentioned as exemplar the dean of Oriental authorities, William Theodore de Bary of Columbia University, with his "Education for a World Community" reprinted from Liberal Education (Dec. 1964), and the indefatigable Ward Morehouse, to whose unceasing efforts, as well as those of his associate, Arthur Osteen, much of New York's outstanding position in furthering Asian Studies can be traced. Morehouse's article reprinted from the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (Nov. 1964) is entitled, "Provincialism and Constitutionalism: The Role of the States in Foreign Area Studies."

The year of publication is important; as the then Chairman J. Ralph Murray of the Commission on International Understanding pointed out, there were twice as many colleges reporting non-Western activity in 1964 as there had been at the original survey in 1962. (p. 8) Already in 1961 a State Education Department survey had been made of college courses on the Soviet Union, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The results, called The Non-Western World in New York State Higher Education, were analyzed by William C. Sayers, Associate in Education Research. He discovered that of the 118 colleges and universities participating in the survey, only 74 percent offered any non-Western courses, almost half of these

being at large universities. The areas most frequently studied were Soviet Russia and the Far East, while the rest of Asia as well as Africa were almost completely neglected. But even so, the enrollment had increased over the preceding three years. It is safe to say that the present level of interest in areas outside our own culture stream has developed largely within the last ten years.

Of particular relevance to the subject of this paper is the fact that in 1961 only 23 two-year colleges responded to the survey and these accounted for little more than one percent of the non-Western courses offered. Since this time the junior colleges have been ignored in surveys of foreign area studies. Disregarded are the changes which have been steadily taking place both in the number of students who pass their important first years in junior colleges and in the increased area competence of their faculty. This study aims to start filling the gap.

In the 1966 publication International Education in the Developing State Colleges and Universities (p. 20) the three reasons most commonly given by colleges for adoption of non-Western programs were the following, in order:

1. "Americans must become acquainted with 'non-Western' regions for an understanding of our problems in and policies toward troubled or developing areas."

2. "The student's understanding of his own civilization isn't adequate until he has studied another /from/ which he can survey his own in a different perspective."

3. "Non-Western cultures have intrinsic values which deserve to be appreciated for their own sakes."

Each of these reasons applies as well to two-year as to state colleges. How much it might have helped the young people now struggling in Vietnam if they had had the perspective of a general background of understanding of the values of the Asian people with whom they must deal!

The rapid rise of the two-year college movement in New York State and the solid fact that nearly two million students will thus start their college career make it disastrous to disregard such an important aspect of education. New York State opened three new junior colleges in 1967 and enrollment in community colleges rose by 27 percent, according to the Junior College News Bulletin. If it is important for all college students to broaden their horizons to include Asian and African material, surely the two-year college must not remain provincial whether or not the students will transfer. In fact, says Harold Epstein, Vice-President of the Institute of International Education, no terminal student especially, should leave "without some appreciation and understanding of the world of which we are now so interdependent a part." Writing in a special issue of the Junior College Journal (Feb. 1967) devoted to International Education, he bewails the small part which junior colleges still play in broadening the student's outlook. He feels that the development of language and area study programs, coupled with the infusion of international material into existing courses is of paramount importance.

This study has focussed on Asian and African Studies because these were slower than Russian Studies to get started, but have proven of crucial importance in the last few years.

Our strenuous efforts to deal with Asians have often bumbled because we simply did not understand their motives or ways of living, and had little appreciation of the riches of their culture. "Why don't they do as we say?" is as often a sign of western parochialism as of eastern recalcitrance. The need to find out quickly about the vast unknown of Africa, to whose ancient oral culture we have wilfully shut our eyes, has been underlined on every college campus and riot-torn street. Symtomatic of our hasty awakening is the discovery that while there are now many more Asian than African courses on two-year campuses, the number of new African courses planned far outruns the Asian. Both areas of the world are vital to our continued life here in the United States. Young people especially have need of this understanding for their future ever-closer association.

The last question has to do with the significance of New York as a state to study. James E. Allen, the then President of the University of the State of New York in his Foreword to The International Dimensions of Education in New York State (1963) stated that these "are particularly relevant . . . because of our location at the vortex of world trade, commerce, cultural and political life." He mentioned the U. N. headquarters in New York City, world-wide communications, and the presence of a host of internationally concerned institutions. In its world contacts New York may well lead the nation, and its obligation to increase deeper understanding is equally outstanding.

Another impelling reason for the inclusion of Asian and African studies within the first two college years is that in New York State an introduction to the complexities of these continents is now becoming a regular part of the ninth grade social studies. New York considers acquaintance with these areas so important that it has called in its most mature talents to devise a syllabus that will arouse curiosity and interest in junior high school years. I have attended some of the ninth grade sessions and have heard the eager questions the children asked of the visiting Indian student after they had seen a film on Hinduism. The interest aroused in these early teenagers will seek further exploration on a college level, and the junior colleges who will receive many of them as students had better be ready to meet their need.

Through its location, its wide international contacts, its manifold opportunities for increasing faculty competence, and its active furtherance through the State Education Department of student awareness, New York State stands in a key position to advance Asian/African studies.

Methods Used

A questionnaire was sent to the president or dean of each of the two-year colleges listed in the New York section of the Educational Directory. Depending on the responses, interviews were conducted at promising institutions; it was also possible to talk with many faculty members at conferences and institutes. Further confirmation has been obtained from college catalogs, course outlines and other formulations of action. From the State

Education Department came much useful material, while the State University of New York (SUNY) in its various branches supplies a view of the practical working out of many of the ideas in the pamphlets. Several four-year colleges with international interests share their faculty and foreign contacts with the two-year colleges, while the large universities with their libraries and extended facilities have served from the beginning as centers of advanced work and training points for faculty.

General Written Material

Many of the books, pamphlets, and the reprints of articles concerned with international studies have already been mentioned. They are helpful in giving a general background, though again most of them are written with the four-year colleges in view, whereas it is in the first two years that a beginning is needed. Doctor de Bary in the article already cited recommends introductory courses conducted in English in the early years of college. Good translations of Asian and African writings have been published by a number of companies in readily accessible paperbacks, and these give the introit and quality of an unfamiliar culture more readily than labor over syntax and vocabulary, necessary as these are for the specialist. It is not the business of the two-year college to develop specialists, but to give the general background into which the segments of later study can be meaningfully filled.

One source of information hitherto unmentioned is ERIC, the Educational Research Information Center, which exists for the purpose of putting the researcher in quick touch with available

material. The clearinghouse for junior college information is at the University of California at Los Angeles, but all ERIC centers carefully supply bibliographies, statistics, and reprints of articles, and the total catalogs can be scanned at any center, for instance that on Adult Education at Syracuse University. Reprints, Xeroxed material, and microfilm are readily secured.

Descriptive Sketch of Results

The two-year college scene, particularly that of the community colleges, is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to give a completely accurate picture. Yet, although the figures may change slightly, the trend is clear. The colleges are starting cautiously, but broadening their international scope as students and facilities accrue to them and as capable teachers appear. One institution with a strong Asian studies offering replied to the question of its inception with the remark that a competent man had turned up just as the dean recognized the need for a wider program. The professor might otherwise have been retired, but entered into his new assignment with an enthusiasm that attracted flocks of students.

Results differ widely of course, and the success of Asian or African studies depends largely on the dedication of the instructor, his willingness to do extra work and his conviction that it is worth while, as well as on the consistent support of the administration. People have an unfortunate tendency to sink back into the narrow comfortable limits of their own culture streams unless they are continually reminded of the dangers of

such shortsightedness. The drag of convention must be constantly overcome. Students must be aroused to the values and beauty of ancient literature and arts, and it is the adult person who has already experienced them who can make them exciting. Fortunately such faculty members are yearly increasing in numbers. The Asian studies people whom I encountered were marked by one common quality, their enthusiasm for their subject.

Out of 65 two-year colleges in New York State in 1968-69, 54 responded to the questionnaire, and of these, 45, or about 83 percent, offer designated Asian/African courses or have measurable amounts of infused material in courses with other names. Newly started colleges or those with limited agricultural and technical goals are less likely to have non-Western cultural courses, and several SUNY Technical Schools said they were discouraged from using funds in this way. Of 15 who have no or slight programs, 8 are technical in nature, while 5 are religiously based. Only 7 consistently answered "No" to all questions.

The number of formal Asian courses is 19, of which 6 are a year or more in length, although most are of three-credit hours for a semester. African courses in 1968-69 numbered 11, or little more than half of the Asian, but the situation is reversed for planned new courses. Here the number is respectively 6 and 11, with other African courses still in the discussion stage; but probably already many of these are under way. (See appended charts.)

Infusion of new material in an existing course can be brought about without the slow and precarious route through the dean's office, the curriculum committee and the faculty meeting;

many of the less adventurous colleges have chosen this path. The original intent, indeed of area seminars, says Dr. Howard Burnett, President of the College Center of the Finger Lakes, where many of these faculty seminars have been held, was to supply teachers with the material to do just that. Whatever their field, they could insert international comparisons and thus broaden their courses. Infusion of Asian/African material in history has occurred in 25 of the responding colleges. In addition, 6 colleges infuse material in anthropology, 4 in literature, and 1 each in government, comparative economics, child study, and in the related topics of a course in Western Civilization. Two colleges encourage independent Asian/African study even if courses do not include it. History and related subjects are the usual springboard.

As might be expected within the two-year limit, few colleges can offer an eastern language program. Only Bennett with its Japanese connections offers an Asian language in the area studied during the regular year, while Nassau Community College offers Chinese in its summer session. Other schools must content themselves with the knowledge of the rapidly increasing availability of good translations and studies in English. William Theodore de Bary writing in Education for a World Community does not let his own scholarship stand in the way of advocating "any study that liberates man for a better life" whether or not it must be done in English. He finds it dismaying that small liberal arts colleges, which ought to be offering introductory courses in Asian studies that would generate the desire for

later language study, do nothing because facilities for the latter are lacking. "Such an introduction should be available to all students . . . during the first years of college . . . an integral part of their general education." Our approach, concludes Dr. de Bary must be on a human rather than a mechanical level which has often formed the basis for past mistakes in foreign policy. We must build "the basis for a new understanding, a new world community in which all peoples will contribute to the building." We cannot wait for language competence in the two-year college.

Interest in Asian and African studies has been stimulated largely by faculty travel and by participation in the seminars sponsored by the Federal Government and the State Education Department working through regional associations and individual colleges and universities. Deans and supervisors have had overall planning sessions under SUNY at Planting Fields, Long Island. Nineteen colleges report faculty travel while 16 mention attendance at seminars, some people attending several. Among colleges and other reported sources of stimulation are SUNY at New Paltz, Colgate University, Bennett College, Columbia University, Syracuse University, the University of Rochester, the Peace Corps, the Japan Society, Asia House, NDEA, Fulbright fellowships, and International Students Association. Four indicate privately financed study while 10 show incentive through student request, in one case from a student trip to Russia, and in another to India. A few colleges found a general faculty awareness of the need for wider horizons in the international field.

Several colleges report Asian or African members on the faculty, totaling 18 Asians and 5 Africans, with the largest number of Asians being Indian followed by Chinese. They teach in varied fields, especially chemistry, mathematics and social sciences. Nine felt that their presence had impact on the desire for Asian/African studies, 5 denied any effect, and the rest felt uncertain.

All of the colleges reporting programs stated that their libraries had working and growing area collections. Art exhibits and books were available to 20, and 26 made use of slides and films of the area studied. A smaller number, 16, had a record collection, while only 11 were able to recruit native speakers.

The background of the teaching faculty was surprisingly broad, and suggests that the two-year colleges are not making full use of their potential. Most of the professors had done graduate study in their area at such universities as Cornell, Temple, McGill, Syracuse, Columbia, Chicago, Ottowa, the War College in Asian History. They had studied abroad and spent considerable time in Japan, India, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and countries of Africa. At Bennett were faculty members who had taught in Japan, at Cazenovia one who had taught in the African Peace Corps and another in India. Colleges with more faculty preparation especially of travel and study in the area offered show broader coverage. Bennett considers an inter-area comprehension so important that all freshmen take a full year of East-West studies, while sophomores may choose among semester courses. Among the faculty are ex-ambassadors who have lived in the area studied.

Most foreign students seek four-year colleges, yet some realize that the more intimate, informal atmosphere of the two-year college is a good vay to learn American attitudes and ways of speech. One college gives full scholarships to attract foreign students, and three welcome Asians by giving special language help. One college reports to its surprise 31 students from Iran, without making special effort for them; but it seems that many two-year colleges could make definite efforts to attract foreign students with benefit to both sides. The Asian/African students could make American friends while young Americans could discover that people of different skins and facial contours are basically like themselves. Colleges with the most developed programs, such as Corning, Bennett and Cazenovia are beginning to attract Asians and a few Africans who have heard of them from former graduates.

Most colleges point to their open admission policy, and 18 have tried special encouragement for the disadvantaged, many of whom are Negroes. Onondaga Community College proudly reports that it has attracted the highest percentage of blacks in the area. Two are giving courses in Negro history and literature, while several are planning Afro-American courses. Cazenovia, which has an African History course, has also held a summer institute and a six-week summer session on black literature. Several literature courses have infused Afro-American material.

As a basis of comparison with Asian/African courses, a question was posed as to other "non-Western" areas covered, with the specific suggestion of Russia and Latin America, both of

which began to be of interest much earlier after World War I. Results show Russian history or language courses in 16 institutions and Latin American history in 15. Asian/African courses have now outrun them, although in several cases language courses in Russian and Spanish are included. Three had courses called "Comparative Cultures." Those colleges now developing Asian/African courses are also more likely to already have had the earlier interest.

Conclusions

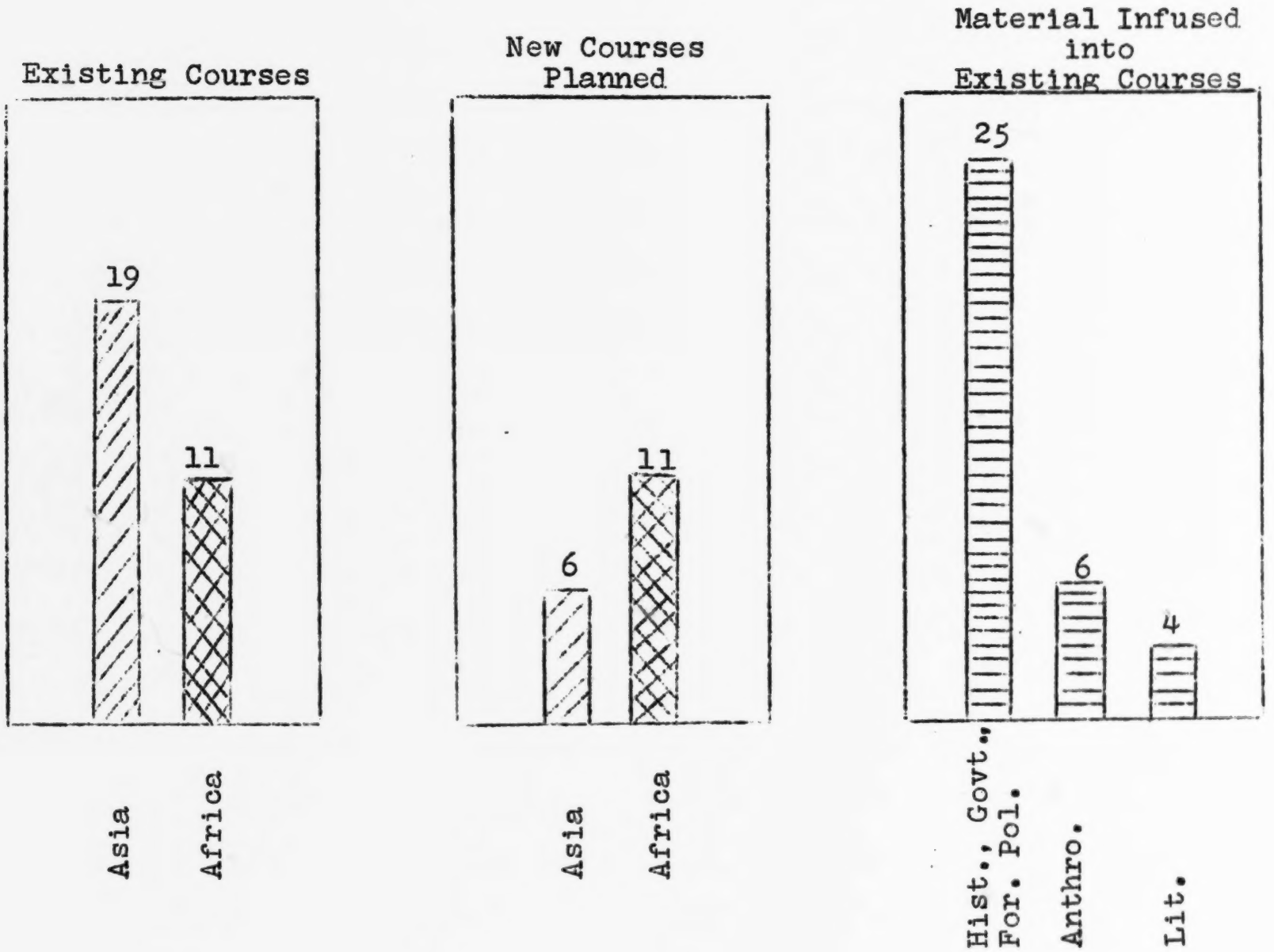
International area studies are here to stay. There is a growing realization on the part of the general public as well as the colleges that knowledge about other ways of living is vitally important if we are to preserve our own values. We cannot deal intelligently with a proud and ancient people if we scorn their inborn traditions and are ignorant of their treasured culture. Over and over again experienced teachers assert that their object is to arouse interest and awareness rather than to impart scraps of information. Irmgard Johnson writing in the Journal of Higher Education (1960, p. 123) even says it is better if the teacher does not know so much he confuses the students. The goal is to open the way to continued self-education.

Since Asian/African studies are on the rise, it is highly desirable that introductory courses be given in the early years of college, so that a student can discover his interest, and form a background within which to place his later language and specialized courses. The interdisciplinary course is a natural

for area studies, since life does not divide itself into neat compartments, but flows into a many-sided whole. Particularly in Asia and Africa are religion, art, music, the dance-drama and village customs a part of daily living. These aspects are complementary and to study one while knowing nothing of the others is to distort one's understanding of the whole. By gaining a first sympathetic interest in a people through the humanities the student is ready to relate more readily to such national and abstract subjects as economics and political science.

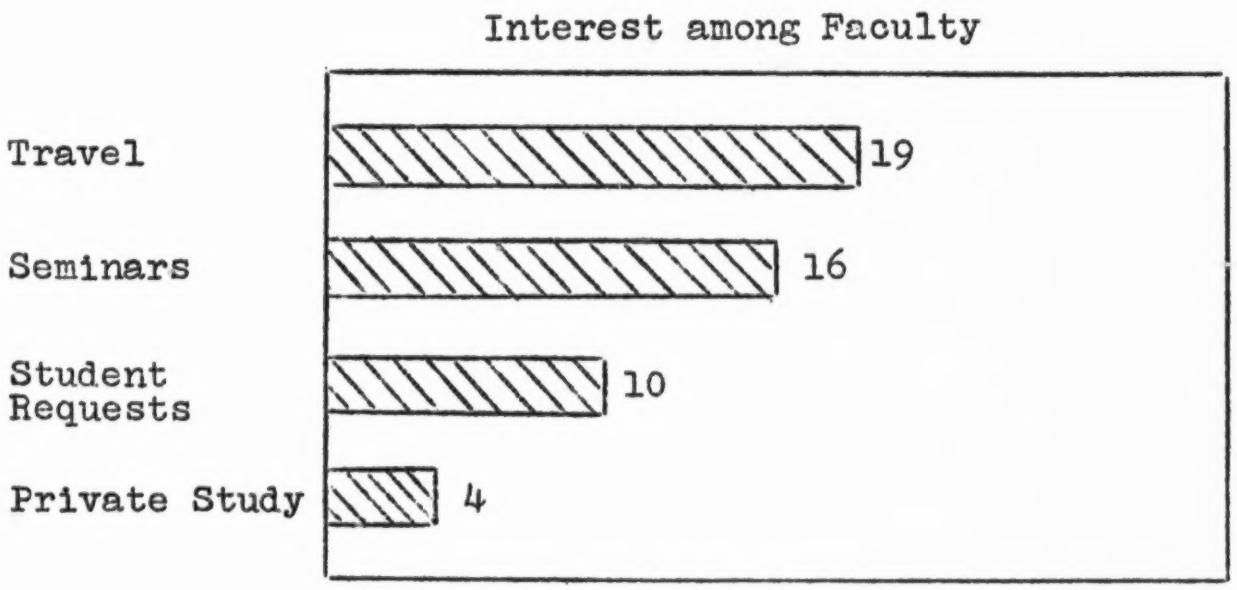
Interdisciplinary courses may cause a few administrative headaches since no one person in a two-year college is likely to be an expert on all phases of an area study. Team teaching where each faculty member approaches the subject from his own discipline works very well with sufficient enthusiasm and good-will on everyone's part. Cazenovia has used this technique for three years. Teaching load does become a problem, however, in situations where no administrative flexibility can be worked out. Department walls sometimes are raised artificially high by those who fear innovation, forgetting that the department concept is itself a relatively new division of the body of learning. A new term, "the generalist," is used by the respected Association of Asian Studies to designate an area teacher who is concerned with all phases of his subject, but seeks to keep them in balance. Starting usually from his graduate major as a base, the generalist attempts to gain a complete picture of a culture. He is probably the best equipped to teach an introductory and exploratory course.

In view of the value of international studies, the growing acceptance of them, and the upcoming influx of New York State students with an aroused curiosity about Asia and Africa, it seems that the two-year colleges face a clear challenge. Fortunately faculty are preparing themselves to meet the need, and each year the available teaching material is increasing. Guidelines have been suggested in the latest publication (1969) of the Center for International Programs and Comparative Studies of the State Education Department. Entitled Education for the Revolutionary World of the Future, it advocates providing every student "with a real understanding of the social and cultural diversity of the modern world." New York State two-year colleges have just begun to realize this goal, but they have a unique opportunity to help attain it for their students.



Nearly twice as many two-year colleges have courses on Asia as on Africa, but 11 are planning new courses on Africa while only 6 are on Asia. Most courses are for a semester; 2 are a half semester and 6 are a year. Some colleges infuse material in addition to starting new courses.

Interest has been aroused among the faculty in a wide variety of ways, of which travel is the most common. Seminars, many of them initiated by the Center for International Services come next, with student request playing an increasing role.



Two-year colleges are rapidly building learning resources in which audio-visual materials help to make books vivid. More native speakers are to be desired.